505 ment with launch or dhow owners, but it should be remembered that some of them are private property. Umm as-Sabaan is the private 423 property of Mr. Max W. Thornberg, Jidda being a penal settlement, 486 is forbidden ground, and Umm an-Nasaan may only be visited with permission of H.H. The Ruler. The others, the small islands south of Muharraq, Nebih Salih, Jezira and the Howar islands are free to all visitors and a visit to them makes a change from drives around the islands.

489 Transport in Bahrain includes both bus and taxi, the former are not 493 the luxurious affairs seen in Europe and England but have wooden bodies built in Bahrain and attached to an imported chassis. Taxis, however, are not too expensive if care is taken to pay the correct fare which is recorded in a fare book that should be carried by every driver. It is rumoured that taxis will soon carry meters, which will certainly simplify matters, but till that happy day passengers who have complaints to make about being over-charged should make them to the Traffic Department of the State Police.

435 Petrol and oil are cheap in Bahrain, which is not surprising, and the 493 import tax on cars and motor cycles is only 10%, so that to own and run 651 a private car is cheaper than in England or the States, as many fortunate people have discovered. Most makes of cars are obtainable in Bahrain, garage facilities have increased and the improvement in the roads has enabled English cars to be used with comfort.

492 The old-fashioned form of transport in Bahrain was the donkey. 489 It was used for every task, for bringing the produce of the country for sale in the town, for pulling carts and for riding. The white Bahrain donkeys used to be well known all over the Middle East and they were exported from Bahrain to places as far distant as the East African coast. Today buses are replacing donkeys, there are bus services between most of the villages, though many of the young men prefer to use bicycles. Lorries too have successfully competed with donkeys and now carry most of the goods between the towns and villages, but in the gardens and in the narrow country lanes one still meets many donkeys though few of the fine white beasts for which the islands were famous long ago. However, the donkey will never entirely die out, for he has certain advantages over other methods of transport, he can reproduce young donkeys, he can find his own way along small and narrow tracks in the gardens and he produces manure, which is a valuable commodity in Bahrain.

CHAPTER V

BAHRAIN'S OIL INDUSTRY

315 THE man who was chiefly responsible for the discovery of Bahrain's 471 oil resources was an Australian, Major Frank Holmes, who came to Bahrain on behalf of the Eastern and General Syndicate, a British prospecting company. Major Holmes, after drilling a number of artesian wells and thus discovering something about the composition

471 The financing of a pearl boat is a complicated affair. Formerly
228 most boats were owned by their captains, but today the majority of the larger boats belong to land merchants. In cases where boats belong to captains but are financed by land merchants, the latter make a profit of about 10%, but in cases where the merchants both own and provision the boats they receive 20% of the profits. After deducting costs, the remainder of the profit is shared in fixed proportions, the nakhuda receiving five parts, the diver two and the Saib one.

437 When the nakhuda sells the catch he must always be accompanied
228 by two members of the crew, to see fair play. Sales are carried out in an unusual way. If the nakhuda and the purchaser or broker do not want the audience to know the amounts offered for the pearls, and as the sales take place in the quarter of the pearl brokers there are always interested bystanders, they spread a cloth over their hands and bargain by a sort of deaf and dumb language. Once they have agreed on the price the nakhuda must obtain the consent of the two witnesses before the sale is considered valid. The value of the pearls is established in
804 a special way. In the case of ordinary pearls, they are collected in
435 great numbers, sorted for size by a set of graded sieves, and each group
228 is weighed and counted and their value in "chows," a form of measurement derived from the weight of the pearls, is discovered from a book printed for the purpose. Once a pearl or pearls have been assessed at so many chows, the question of the value per chow is settled by bargaining, the price per chow depending on the average shape, texture and colour in the case of bunches of pearls or in single pearls. In the case of pairs of pearls their value depends greatly on how well they are matched. Seed pearls, the smallest form of pearls, are sold entirely by weight, while a single pearl has been known to sell for as much as £15,000, as in the case of the Bahrain pearl which was eventually bought by a well known American lady.

228 It is very difficult to estimate the value of the Bahrain catch in past
433 years, the figure for 1833 was estimated at £240,000, £400,000 in 1835 and £303,941 in 1896. In more recent years the Bahrain Government has given official figures which outline the history of the industry during the past quarter of a century. In 1833 it was also said that there were 1,500 boats leaving Bahrain annually for the pearl banks, and in 1896, 900. The largest number of Bahrain pearling boats has been given as 2,000 but this figure is probably an exaggeration. That the industry has declined is proved by the figures, in 1930, 509 boats manned by 19,300 men found pearls worth Rs. 2,125,000, while in 1948 there were only 83 boats with a crew of 2,000 and finding a catch worth Rs. 855,000. Although the numbers of boats and divers decreased by about 6 times and 9 times respectively it is noticeable that the catch only decreased in value by 2½ times and in 1950 the catch was worth Rs. 1,650,000, more than half of the 1930 figure.

228 The reason for the decline in the industry, which started in 1930,
178 was the severe trade depression which began in that year and which
433 reduced the wealth of those in Europe who were in the habit of buying

Sales and Land Values. The aggregate value of the property which was sold was approximately 40 lakhs, £300,000. In the previous year prices reached a somewhat higher figure but they included several sales of large areas of land on the edge of Manama. There has been no fall in land prices and there are no indications of a change in the situation. High prices are still being paid for building sites in Manama on which European style houses, flats and bungalows, are being built, which are let at excessively high rents. When the demand for houses of this type begins to lessen then rents will decrease and there are some signs that this event is not far off, several recently built houses have "To Let" notices on their doors. At present as much as Rs. 1,000/- per month is being charged for a three-bedroom, dining-sitting-room bungalow on the Jufair Road.

A recent satisfactory development has been the demand by working class men to buy small building plots in Manama, Muharraq, Hidd and Rafaa. The building loan schemes of the Government and the Bahrain Petroleum Company have stimulated this development. At one time people were satisfied to live in hired houses or barastis for which they paid rent but now, partly owing to the rapaciousness of landlords and partly because it has become everyone's ambition to own the house in which he lives, there is an active demand for plots of ground on which small houses can be built. Unfortunately the Government owns very little land in and around Manama and nobody wishes to live even at a short distance from the bazaar, the schools and the cinemas.

The most important sales were an Arab style house in the southern district of Manama, on Shaikh Isa Road, which was sold for Rs. 200,000 and a plot of land in the Qudhabia district which was bought by the Government as a site for workmen's dwellings for Rs. 2,57,000, at Rs. 2/5 per square foot. The Government sold 87 plots of land, in various places, for Rs. 3.50,000. Land on the edge of the towns of Manama and Muharraq was sold at prices ranging from Rs. 1/4 to Rs. 3/- per square foot. Thirty building plots were sold at East Rafaa, on the plain below the town, to residents of Rafaa, at 2 Annas per square foot. Land on this site was marked out as a residential area with rows of plots of uniform depth along future roads. At the end of the year a few purchasers had begun to build stone houses on the ground which they bought.

Legislation. In Safar (October 1952) an important Ordinance was issued which prohibited all persons subject to Bahrain jurisdiction from disposing of any property except to Bahrain subjects. An extension of this order was issued later providing for the contingency of heirs in an estate of a Bahrain subject being themselves foreign subjects. The result of these Ordinances was that not only were Bahrain subjects restricted from selling their property to foreigners but all persons subject to Bahrain jurisdiction, Persians, subjects of Saudi Arabia and of other Gulf States, were restricted from selling their property to each other or to nationals of other countries. Only foreigners not under the jurisdiction of the Bahrain Courts were free to sell their property to other foreigners. The object of the Government is to prevent land in Bahrain from being alienated and it is hoped that in future this legislation will be further extended to preclude all foreigners in Bahrain from disposing of their property to any persons who are not Bahrain subjects.

The imposition of this ordinance caused some resentment among foreigners especially among Saudi Arabians and Persians who in the past have acquired extensive property in Bahrain. This ordinance was probably the cause of some reduction in the number of large land sales during 1372.

One of the reasons why the Government now has so little land at its disposal in Manama and on the outskirts of the town is because in the past large pieces of land were either sold or given to Persians and Saudi Arabians. In the former category is one of the principal landowners in the town. The only area of any size, suitable for development as a housing area, is the land on the south-west of Manama which is now occupied by the installations of Cable and Wireless Ltd. Arrangements are being made for the Company to move out into the country to a site on the Aali plain, but this move will take some time to be carried out.

Rents of Government Shops. The Department collected rents amounting to Rs. 51,000/- from the shops in Barrett Road and from the flat above the Post Office and Rs. 20,000/- from rents of 26 plots of land which were let on leases. Temporary leases of land produced Rs. 3,800.

504 and for cargo, as at present only very small boats can come alongside when the tide is at its lowest. While work was being done on the Manamah-Muharraq road it was inadvisable to start more stone work at the pier, but when the road is complete the pier extension will probably be begun.

651 4/39 It is also proposed that a small office for customs and passport officials should be built on the Muharraq aerodrome.

Year.	Customs Receipts.	No. of Steamers.	Remarks.
1344	8,82,000	—	A poor pearling season.
1345	9,62,000	—	Increase in all imports, especially rice, wheat, flour, and sugar. Persia increased taxes on tea and sugar.
1346	10,58,000	—	Increase of Rs 95,000/- from sugar and piece goods. Good pearling season.
1347	10,59,000	118	Bazaars becoming overstocked.
1348	8,95,000	—	Budget expectations not fulfilled. Decrease in wholesale costs of all imports; silk and cotton goods depreciate 25% in value, carpets and abbas 40%.
1349	6,36,000	96	Slump in pearl trade; prices of rice and wheat decrease 50%; export of sugar almost ceased. Chief exporter became bankrupt.
1350	6,19,000	97	Decrease in prices of all goods. Pearl market very dull. Very large export of gold from Bahrain to India through Indian and Jewish firms. Japanese monopolise piece-goods trade.
1351	5,46,000	104	Continued decline in price of staple commodities; one quarter less packages imported. Increase in Japanese goods and import of cheap Japanese silk. Customs dues on luxury articles raised from 5% to 7½%, and then to 10%, and on tobacco to 15%, and liquor, previously free, to 15%. Iraq wheat takes place of Persian wheat in Bahrain market.
1352	5,58,000	149	Continued fall in value of commodities. In five years Japanese imports rose from Rs 5,000/- to Rs 13,42,000/-.
1353	6,01,000	174 (20 oil tankers)	Prices still decreasing, but quantity of imports increased.
1354	6,50,000	195 (19 oil tankers)	Steady improvement in imports and increased activity in trading.
1355	8,28,000	251	Steady improvement in imports and increased activity in trading.

PRICES OF COMMODITIES

● 4/35

Commodity	Year 1929.	Year 1934.	Year 1935.
Ballam rice	16/-	9/8	10/8
Karach rice	13/-	7/8	8/-
Rangoon rice	13/-	7/8	8/-
Sugar, Java	19/-	12/-	10/8
Sugar, crystal	16/-	11/-	9/8
Sugar, loaf	14/-	9/-	8/8
Wheat flour, Indian	17/-	11/-	11/-
Wheat flour, Iraqi	—	7/8	6/8
Tea, black	65/-	40/-	75/-

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Saudi Arabia MJ1
Kuwait MI1
Bahrain MZ2

A 565 511 adds a reckless lack of thrift which leads him to spend his income, however large, cheerfully when it comes in, with no regard at all for tomorrow when he may face absolute want. The natural results are seen in the pitiful condition of the men who do the work in the gardens of Mesopotamia and the pearl divers of Bahrein. A trifle further down in the scale of misery is the slave community of Dibai.

A 556 622 435 The greatest development of the avarice of the rich is seen where the introduction of western ideas of the sacredness of life and property has permitted its unchecked growth. Under the primitive Arab government it is not allowed to flourish unchecked. There are various methods by which the ruler tries to counteract the rapacity of the rich. Various articles of food have their price fixed and any exactions over the given figure are rigorously punished. Within limits this is a useful measure. I K 435 612 692 once sat in Mubarak's judgment hall in Kuwait when the leading merchant of the city was publicly rebuked and ordered to reduce his freight rates on dates from Basra to Kuwait. As a permanent method, however, it is a failure, for it simply means that a particular industry languishes. In Bahrein, for instance, the price of fish B 435 has been arbitrarily fixed at a point far below their real value. The result is not cheap fish but no fish at all. It is easy to prevent men from charging more than a certain price for fish, but even an Arab sheikh cannot make men fish if they have no adequate inducement for doing so.

A 427 675 622 692 A more effective means of keeping the balance somewhat even is the cancellation of oppressive contracts, especially when unforeseen circumstances arise, as for instance in Katif when the date crop has been a partial or complete failure. The original contract to deliver to the